

How to Raise Healthy Geese for the Backyard Farm



Do you want to raise healthy geese for your backyard farm? The goose is a good choice for a poultry addition to a homestead. Friendly and good at foraging, the goose will add a whole new dimension to your daily chores. Many people think that geese are similar to any other water fowl, such as ducks or even that geese are like raising turkeys or chickens. This is not entirely true. Geese have some unique characteristics and needs and should not be considered the same as the ducks. Raising healthy geese is not hard though. Take a look at what geese require.

Are Geese Good Watchdogs?

One thing that seems to be a bit confusing is the thought of using geese to protect other poultry. This can be a dangerous misconception for the goose. Geese are territorial and

protective. They will not back down readily from an attack, which may give other birds a chance to escape. However no goose is a match for an attack by a dog, large fox or any other larger predator.



Housing?

In order to raise healthy geese for many years, provide a suitable structure for them to go into at night. Geese do not roost on a bar like chickens, guineas and turkeys. Provide a well ventilated, sturdy, low to the ground structure. Line the floor with dry straw and the geese will be happy campers!

Each goose requires approximately 3 square feet of floor space in the structure. Since you will rarely want to confine them longer than overnight, the house does not need to be very large. Two geese could be very comfortable in a 3 by 6 enclosure.

We use snap hooks on the latches for our poultry buildings for added security. Most foxes can't figure these out and the raccoon haven't outsmarted the latches yet.

When Raising Healthy Geese, Do You Need a Pond?

Geese are not like ducks. They need water of course but do not require water to the same extent. The one point that might make a difference is if you are hoping to brood goslings with your goose breeding pair. Geese have an easier time mating when in the water. In any event, the geese won't spend lots of time on the pond like ducks might.

Raise Healthy Geese with the Right Food

Geese eat grass. That is their primary food source. If you plan to raise healthy geese on grass, they will need all access, every day to grass. The grass should not be too long. Three inches tall is a good measurement. The geese will nibble the grass and graze along. All the nutrition the geese need is included in the grasses. If you don't have enough pasture or grass you can feed wheat, poultry layer pellets and supplement with fresh greens. Lettuce, cabbage and, occasionally, cooked vegetables can be fed, also.

- note- do not feed layer crumbles or mash to the geese. It can disrupt their ability to swallow by getting stuck in the upper bill.

Wheat is provided in a bucket and covered with water. The wheat sinks to the bottom of the bucket. This prevents wild birds, rats and mice from accessing the wheat. Also, picking up all food at bedtime helps prevent rodent infestations.

If you happen to have sheep to graze down the grass first, it helps keep the grass short enough for the geese. If you don't have sheep available, just mow the grass down to a reasonable height before letting the geese out to graze.

Housing with Other Poultry and Water Fowl

There aren't any reasons why you can't keep geese with chickens or other large water fowl. Each situation will be different. Most likely you will get more than one gosling to begin with. As the goslings grow you will notice that they probably stick to their own flock and the chickens will stick to hanging with the other chickens.

The geese will grow considerably bigger than your chickens and you will need to watch for any aggression. Areas that are large enough for everyone to roam and graze give you the best chance of different poultry species getting along.



Geese Breeds

Light breeds – Brown and White Chinese and Roman Tufted

Medium breeds – Pilgrim, American Buff and Sebastopol

Heavy breeds – Toulouse, African and Embden

Geese can be loyal and affectionate pets. They bond to each other and can be territorial during mating season. Since geese can live 15 to 20 years, you will be able to enjoy your pet geese for a long time.



***Raising
Healthy Geese***

What type of house?
What do you feed a
goose?
Can you add geese to
your chicken flock?

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